

Testimony of

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**Somers Educator**

Before the

Education Committee

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Good afternoon, Senator McCrory, Representative Currey, Senator Berthel, Representative McCarty, and members of the Education Committee.

I testify today in support of House Bill 6884. This bill takes important steps toward addressing the educator shortage in Connecticut, showing educators that theirs is a respected profession, and ensuring that our classrooms and schools can provide the best possible education for our students.

As a teacher with 8 years of experience and 3 of those being throughout the pandemic, I still don't make the same amount of money as my brother, who doesn't even have a masters like I was required to get by the state. My brother has only been in his career as an engineer for 6 years as well. So I have more education and experience, yet get paid almost half of what he does. I have switched districts, but still need to work a second job so that I can be saving up and not just making ends meet. The pandemic has been an extremely difficult time for everyone, but especially teachers. We had to teach remotely, put in even more time than we usually do, which is already a lot, and help students through extreme trauma. Many of us had to use up our sick days after getting covid, the flu, bronchitis, anything. And if you're a female, you need sick days for maternity leave, so many teachers are losing out there as well. Teachers deserve better. We deserve to be respected for what we do and trusted by our communities. We deserve a liveable wage without needing a second job. We deserve to be paid for our educations, and all of the certifications we have to keep up to date. We barely get reimbursed and are so often asked to bring in necessities to our classrooms. Tissues, crayons, pencils, paper, hand sanitizer, snacks, etc. It's not equitable in the state of CT and that needs to end now. I'm tired of watching teachers leave because they can get paid more somewhere else while not having as much stress placed on them and can be treated somewhere else better. We've lost so many teachers recently and there seems to be no end in sight. Please help save our profession. We need teachers for the future. We need to make the job better for all teachers, present and future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

